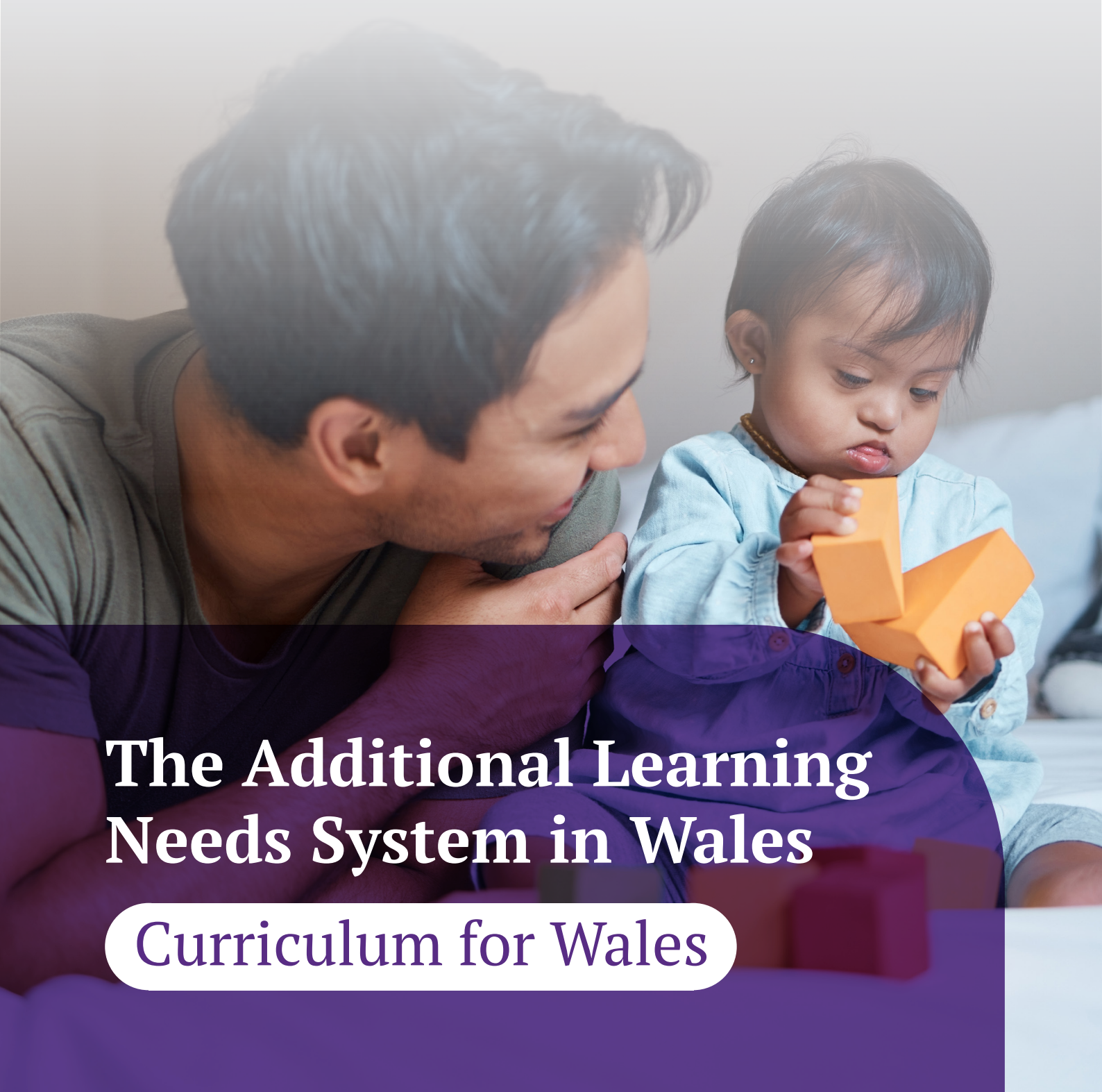




Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

Factsheet



The Additional Learning Needs System in Wales

Curriculum for Wales

The Additional Learning Needs System in Wales

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (referred to as the 'Act' herein) and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (referred to as the 'Code') provide the statutory system for meeting the additional learning needs (ALN) of children and young people. It places the learners' views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process of planning the support required to enable them to learn effectively and achieve their full potential. Whether or not you have a child with recognised ALN within your care, you should be aware of the Code and your responsibilities under it.

This factsheet will explore the ALN system and your responsibilities in supporting children with ALN.

What is the ALN system?

The **additional learning needs (ALN) system** is the system for supporting children and young people aged 0 to 25 in Wales with ALN. The ALN system is *replacing* the special educational learning needs (SEN) system and the system for supporting young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).

Through this system the Welsh Government aims to ensure all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and that they can achieve their full potential, by creating:

- A unified legislative framework to support all children and young people aged 0-25 with ALN
- An integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring of the support provided to ALN learners which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions
- A fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

The act replaces the terms 'special educational needs (SEN)' and 'learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)' with the term '**additional learning needs (ALN)**'.

All children identified as having ALN for the purpose of the act will have a statutory support plan called an **individual development plan (IDP)**. The IDP is the document that contains a description of the ALN that acts as a barrier to the learner in achieving their educational potential and the **additional learning provision (ALP)** that is necessary to address this barrier.

One of the core aims of the ALN act is to create a bilingual system of support for ALN. Consideration should be given to the individual child and whether their ALP is required in Welsh. If so, this must be recorded in their IDP and 'all reasonable steps' must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.

Understanding what is meant by ALN

Many children are likely to experience some form of difficulty or delay in their learning and development, but *may not* be considered to have ALN for the purpose of the act as they can be supported to progress through inclusive practice and differentiated approaches otherwise known as high quality – but routine – teaching

The act defines ALN:

(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision.

(2) A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- i. has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age,*
- or*
- ii. has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education generally provided for others of the same age*

(3) A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age or would be likely to if no additional learning provision (ALP) were made.

(4) A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language in which he or she will be taught is different from a language which is used at home.

The local authority is responsible for making a decision about whether a child who attends a non-maintained setting has ALN. If a non-maintained setting believes a child may have ALN, that setting should discuss their concerns initially with parents/carers. After discussion with parents/carers, either the setting or the parent can bring the concerns to the attention of the local authority. In the absence of parental agreement to approach the local authority, the setting should consider the best interests of the child and consider still making contact. Where a setting is funded for nursery

education, the local authority could ask the setting to support them with their knowledge and understanding of the child to help the local authority decide if the child has ALN.

Support from the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (Early Years ALNLO)

The Early Years ALNLO has a responsibility to co-ordinate additional learning needs support services across the local authority area for children aged 0 - 5, including providing **support, guidance and professional learning** to non-maintained nursery education settings, childcare settings and parents/carers of children with additional learning needs aged 0 - 5.

The Early Years ALNLO is your local authority's key contact for ALN in the early years. Each local authority in Wales is required under the act to designate an EYALNLO to have responsibility for co-ordinating the local authority's functions under the act in relation to children under compulsory school age. Some local authorities may decide to have multiple people within the role or employ a team of people to support to the EYALNLO. You should be able to find contact details for your local authority on their website.

The EYALNLO/local authority will share the process of identifying and supporting ALN with you. You may be asked to provide some evidence to help with the decision of whether the child has ALN. Any evidence that you can offer should help with reaching an informed decision; it would be you and your staff that see the child in the context of their daily activities and would be alert to the child's challenges and needs. This is where your ongoing observations are extremely valuable to the process. For settings that are not funded for nursery education you may also be asked to provide evidence to support decision making.

If a decision has been made that a child has ALN and would benefit from additional learning provision the Early Years ALNLO will begin the process of preparing and issuing an Individual Development Plan.

The role of the individual development plan (IDP)

All children with ALN, regardless of the severity or complexity of their learning needs, are entitled to a statutory support plan called an individual development plan (IDP). Any learner aged 0 to 25 years with ALN as defined earlier will have an IDP.

IDPs are required to use a standard format although the form's style can be adapted to suit local preferences or those of the child or young person. IDPs describe a learner's ALN and set out what provision will be given to help them learn. The IDP is intended to be a flexible document that will vary in length and complexity, depending on the individual needs of learners and the way in which a learner's needs develop and change over time.

For children under compulsory school age the Code imposes requirements on local authorities in respect of the preparation, maintenance, revision of IDPs and ceasing to maintain IDPs (where it is no longer required). Any provision written into an IDP must be provided by law. Funded non-maintained providers of nursery education have a role in helping local authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations.

Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

Children with ALN will receive support called additional learning provision (ALP) which will be set out in their IDP. ALP means education or provision that is additional or different of that provided for others of the same age across Wales.

This will be distinct from strategies and differentiation that is generally available for all children.

ALP predominantly falls within three categories:

1. Support taking place within a small group or individually during play within the environment
2. Where it is additional to, or different from, that made available to learners of the same age
3. Learning provided outside of the setting or by an external professional. E.g. Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), Occupational Therapist (OT).

Non-maintained settings should, where requested, help the local authority in the exercise of its ALN functions in relation to a child's ALP. The IDP will identify the provision that will help the child with their learning, development and care in the context of the settings they attend.

If the child is receiving education or childcare through the medium of Welsh this must be documented in the IDP and all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that any support is also available through the medium of Welsh.

Person Centred Practice (PCP)

Person-centred practice and planning (PCP) is a way of working together and communicating positively with each other, always with the child or young person at the centre of the process. The views, wishes and feelings of the child young person will be at the heart of decision making. PCP is central to the rights-based approach, a key principle within the act.

In education settings PCP is used to focus on what is important to the learner and how best we can support them. Family involvement is central to these discussions. The Welsh Government expects all IDPs to be created in a person-centred way. This means that children, their parents/carers must be actively involved in the development of an IDP. This is achieved through PCP meetings. Other partner agencies that are involved are: schools, support services, care services and health services.

For funded non-maintained settings, there is no legal obligation to attend a PCP meeting. Where you may wish to accept an invitation to contribute to a meeting about ALN or an IDP, this could be done by attending the meeting (in person or remotely) or by contributing outside of the meeting through, for example, providing some evidence about the child's needs or progress.

Person centered approaches should be at the heart of everything we do with children with ALN and this approach aligns with the child-centered focus of early years pedagogy in Wales.

'One-page profiles' are the foundation of personalised education support. It gathers key information about a learner so it can be quickly shared and understood, celebrating a child's individual achievements, no matter their stage of development is already common practice within the sector, so you may feel that you are already promoting inclusive practice.

Other available tools and models that are seen as best practice to support PCP are:

- **Appreciation tool:** Five good-quality points that focus on characteristics rather than on appearance or academic accomplishments. It helps us to find out what others like and admire about a child's character and personality. It identifies the child's skills, gifts, talents and interests
- **Aspirations:** Includes- Why I'm liked and admired. What is important to me. The 'future you'. The 'future do'. Action plan – first steps. Outcomes. Enables adults to identify opportunities to nurture the child's strengths
- **Good day, bad day:** Gather information about what makes a good day and what makes a bad day. Use this information to understand what is important to them and learn how best to support them. Share with others
- **Relationship circle:** This tool visually summarises who is important in a child's life. It helps to define those relationships. Place the people that they know with the most important people closest to the centre. It can help to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones
- **What is and isn't working:** A snapshot of how things are now. An opportunity to acknowledge what is working well and a clear way of highlighting what needs to be different. Identify which are the most important things that are not working. Start developing an action plan with these so you address the highest priority areas first.

The Welsh Government has published guidance and resources to promote and support the development of person-centred practice in early years, schools and colleges -

<https://bit.ly/PCPracticeGov>

Developing good relationships with parents/carers

Involving parents/carers in their children's learning positively impacts everyone involved. Parents/carers feel welcome and valued as an expert on their child and understand that they play a key role in helping practitioners enable their child to participate and learn. To assist in developing relationships with parents/carers in the setting, staff should:

- Build a trusting relationship with the child's parent(s)/carer(s)
- Encourage the parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss the needs of their child
- Encourage the parent(s)/carer(s) to take an active part in all aspects of the setting.

Summary of responsibilities when supporting children with ALN

The roles and responsibilities are defined within the Code. Below is a short summary of those responsibilities. For further details, please refer to the Code.

Practitioners - All education practitioners will be involved in supporting learners with ALN. All education practitioners should reflect on their own professional learning and development

Settings - Non-maintained settings should, where requested, help the local authority in the exercise of its ALN functions and maintain effective partnership working with parents/carers, the Early Years ALNLO/local authority and additional colleagues involved in PCP. In addition, leaders of non-maintained settings should identify professional learning requirements as part of the setting's planning cycle, professional learning plans and self-evaluation processes.

The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years Standard 4: Meeting individual needs highlights the requirements on registered childcare settings in meeting the needs of all children and children with disabilities or additional needs.

Local authorities - Local authorities are directly responsible for meeting the needs of children who do not attend a maintained school (including those below school age). Requirements on local authorities:

- Decisions about whether a child or young person has ALN
- The preparation, content, form, review and revision of IDPs
- Ceasing to maintain IDPs
- Provision of advice and information
- Avoidance and resolution of disagreements
- Provision of independent advocacy services.

The act requires each local authority to designate an Early Years ALN Lead Officer (EY ALNLO), who has responsibility for co-ordinating the local authority's functions under the ALN act in relation to children under compulsory school age.

Top tips for inclusive practice:

- Adapt environments, approaches and resources to ensure access to the curriculum
- Build on existing good practice
- Build positive partnerships with parents/carers
- Celebrate achievements and abilities
- Evaluate the situation frequently – reflect and discuss.
- Foster positive attitudes towards including children with additional needs
- Maximise the child's involvement with a wide range of experiences and people
- Take things slowly – start from what the child can do
- Value and respect everyone's contributions.

Further support

Welsh Government resources include:

- E-learning course: An introduction to the additional learning needs system in Wales: <https://bit.ly/IntoToALN>
- E-learning course: Additional Learning Needs (ALN) principles: <https://bit.ly/ALNPrinciples>
- Additional Learning Needs resources: <https://bit.ly/ALNGov>
- A guide for parents about rights under the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system: <https://bit.ly/ALNParentsRights>

NDNA resources include:

- Curriculum for Wales: Inclusive practice in Wales webpage: <http://www.ndna.org.uk/Inclusive>
- NDNA Cymru factsheet- Neurodiversity in the early years: <http://www.ndna.org.uk/WelshFactsheets>



National Day Nurseries Association

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Factsheet

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NDNA is the national charity and membership association representing children's nurseries across the UK. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability, so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours.

We are the voice of the 21,000-strong nursery sector, an integral part of the lives of more than a million young children and their families. We provide information, training and advice to support nurseries and the 250,000 people who work in them to deliver world-class early learning and childcare.

See the full range of NDNA factsheets at www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets

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